

# Office of Attorney General Terry Goddard



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## Terry Goddard Offers Tips to Avoid Fraudulent Charitable Appeals

(Phoenix, Ariz. – Nov. 9, 2006) The Holiday Season is fast approaching, a time of year when many Arizona consumers contribute to charities. To help ensure a rewarding experience, Attorney General Terry Goddard is advising consumers to be careful when making donations, especially to groups they know little about.

Goddard offers the following tips to make sure donations are sent to legitimate charities:

- Find out how the charity will use your donation.
  - Ask for information about its programs and for a copy of its financial report.
  - Ask what percentage of the funds will be used for programming and how much will be spent on administrative costs.
  - Reputable charities will be happy to provide this information.
- Be careful of charities with names that sound impressive or resemble those of other organizations. Some scam artists use names similar to reputable organizations to confuse donors.
- Find out if the charity is registered with the Secretary of State's Office.
- Be wary of calls soliciting funds that coincide with highly publicized tragedies, such as the wildfires that hit California last month or other dramatic events. Fraudulent fund raisers will try to exploit your sympathy for those who suffered.
- Do not make cash donations. Always contribute by check. Make your check payable to the charity, never to the individual soliciting the donation.
- Be wary of emotional appeals, especially those that insist that, due to an emergency, you must send money now.
- Remember to ask for a receipt and a statement that the contribution is tax deductible.
- Be extremely skeptical of anyone asking for a donation by requesting your credit card number or bank account information over the phone.

If you believe you have been a victim of fraud, please contact the Attorney General's Office in Phoenix at 602.542.5763; in Tucson at 520.628.6504; or outside the Phoenix and Tucson metro areas at 1.800.352.8431. To file a complaint in person, the Attorney General's Office has 36 satellite offices throughout the State with volunteers available to help. Locations and hours of operation are posted on the Attorney General's Web site at [www.azag.gov](http://www.azag.gov). Consumers can also file complaints online through the Web site.

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